



CHRISTMAS AS A SCIENCE



IN THESE latter days, when every branch of human activity has been systematized and we are brought, whether we like it or not, under the spell of scientific management of the smallest business, what is more natural than that we should now be obliged to accept the scientific management of Christmas?

Christmas as a science! How our grandfathers would have gasped at the idea! In their time Christmas was a spontaneous holiday. Christmas eve they hung their stockings on the mantelpiece in full confidence that Santa Claus would find his way through a six-inch stovepipe. Then there was the Christmas tree, with a grandfather to distribute the gifts and a strong force of uncles and aunts to maintain peace among the cousins. And there was skating in the afternoon with the choicest sort of melée to give the finishing touch to the day.

There was no need of science there; it would, in fact, have spoiled the whole thing. But now the spirit of Christmas has changed. We still have our Christmas trees, subject to the regulations of the fire department, but we are really slaves of our Christmas shopping list. From Thanksgiving to Christmas most of us live in an atmosphere of deepening gloom. We have continually hanging over us that dreadful problem of what would be the best thing to give So-and-so, and when we have made a selection our hearts sink at the awful thought that, perhaps, What's-his-name may give the same thing.

It is to relieve this situation as much as possible that science has been called in to our aid. Of course, even science has not yet been able to prevent two people from sending the same gift to one person. But it has been able to display unusual gifts and a larger number of them for our consideration, so that it will be easier to select a present which may be quite sure another person would not think of. And the greatest advantage of scientific Christmas shopping is the increased speed with which the ordeal may be gone through.

There are two things which have brought about this result. The first is the establishment of exhibits of gifts for children in the schools of the large cities of the country. And the second is the scientific arrangement of gifts for sale in the shops and department stores. On one floor we have a department devoted entirely to toys and other gifts for children; in another place presents particularly suited to men; and elsewhere sections for women and boys and girls. It is all the direct result of the card index and the filing cabinet. You look under the particular heading you wish and you find displayed before you a vast quantity of suitable gifts to choose from.

The object of the school exhibits is not so much to save mothers labor, worthy object though that might be. Nor is it to display the latest and most ingenious products of the toy market. Child welfare is the primary purpose, and there we have another side of the scientific Christmas. It is to save the children from being deluged at the Christmas season with inartistic, unhygienic and useless gifts. Esthetic and hygienic are words that loom up larger in the vocabulary of the present than that of the past.

And so, although Noah's ark will remain Noah's ark to the end of the world, no twentieth century younger whose family attends one of these exhibits will feel constrained to suck the paint off Shem, Ham or Japhet. For, lo and behold, they are entirely innocent of the familiar red and green and blue of that unsanitary century we have left behind. The sons of the patriarch and all the animals that "went in two by two" are of reasonably hygienic white wood.

By the same token, dolls will be dolls. For here again the scientific Christmas has produced a change to a more esthetic and hygienic product. Instead of the big rag doll, whose features have been kissed into obliteration by several generations of children, there is a stockinet successor, equally unbreakable, far more beautiful, and absolutely impervious to washing.

For older children one finds marvelous all-wood dolls, again embodying the three important virtues. They are unbreakable, washable and artistic. Their naturalness is evident at a glance, and the visitor is not surprised to learn that they are reproductions of American children modeled by American artists.

And yet, the thought rises, will modern Dorothys and Nancys love these charming creations one whit more than their mothers and grandmothers loved the china and wax dolls who preceded them? There was Henrietta, a gorgeous Parisian, you may remember, whose pink and white loveliness is still a happy memory. Poor Henrietta! She died the victim of a bad small brother who tried the effect of midsummer heat upon her waxen complexion. Then there was Juliet, she of real brown hair that combed and a warm brunette complexion, and a host of others who may have had untold attractions. But you must put them out of your mind in this scientific age. Real hair harbors horrible microbes and complexions do not digest well in small stomachs.

Then there are other suggestions which are the result of the practicality of our time. Housekeeping furnishings, for example, such as tea sets in pewter, cooking utensils in granite and metal, an ironing board and iron which can really be used, and an iron cookstove upon which things can be cooked. In the matter of musical toys, science has gone even further. The pianos for the child of today are marvelous instruments. Alas for the prestige of the tinkly toy of a generation gone by! These have from two to three octaves of the chromatic scale and are accurately tuned "to concert pitch."

But all such marvels cost money and are not likely to avail much for the household where five or six must live on a small income. So it is good to discover a case containing a number of toys at a minimum price. Not one exceeds ten

LITTLE MATTER OF HONESTY

According to Test, Humanity Does Not Rank Very High in What Might Be Called Little Things.

"How deep is your honesty?" asks the Wichita Beacon. "Probably you wouldn't rob a blind man or take pennies from a baby—at least we want to believe that you wouldn't. But if the man at the cigar or candy counter by mistake handed you back too much change and you saw the error, would

cents in cost. It is surprising how many attractive things may be had for this money, and the hard-pressed, busy mother, or doting grandma, or conscientious aunt or inexperienced big cousin is very likely to find there the very thing to buy for Tommy or Ruth.

The scientific Christmas has only begun and before long we will have exhibits for people of all ages and both sexes. As it is, the department stores, by their scientific arrangement and the catalogues and lists of suitable gifts, classified according to ages, have done much toward making even shopping for men a simple matter.

This, however, is a very recent institution. In the old days, a woman went to the large shop, without the slightest idea of what she wanted to buy, and after ten minutes in the crowded, heated aisles, surrounded by thousands of elaborate, alluring, gayly colored possibilities with no apparent order or arrangement, bewilderment and not decision was her portion. Under such conditions, even the most conscientious of them seized the article nearest. She was at the mercy of the saleswoman because she did not know what she had better get or where she could get it.

But the woman's bewilderment was nothing to the man's. He didn't even make an attempt to shop; he simply bought.

But all these things are different now. You get a list of things which such-and-such a store has to offer for man, woman and child of any given age, with the floor on which it may be found indicated, and you have only to walk in calmly and deliberately and purchase it. It is literally an index of the peace and good will which you may wish to dispense. You do all your thinking beforehand and have an opportunity to remember that Mrs. So-and-so's library is furnished in red, and that a Kaiser Sinn vase would be more acceptable than a lamp.

Then when you have made your selection you may make your way to the store with a fairly calm and tranquil mind. Of course, it is crowded with a density which makes progress almost impossible, blinding hot with multitudinous lights and noisy with many clamorous voices, but all that can have no effect on you. You are a scientific shopper and know just what you are going to get and where you are going to get it. Science saves time, money and nerves.

There is another way in which Christmas has become a science and that is in the methods in which the big shopkeeper employs to attract the crowds of holiday shoppers. Go into one of their establishments and you cannot fail to see it. They are aglow with light, bright with the colors of unnumbered fabrics and you hear far and near the clash of music from many instruments. That is simply to lure you in and once you are there you see at first nothing but a spectacle of confusion and a conflict of sounds that would make Babel lose caste as a synonym. But if you start to buy what you have come for you will find a remarkable state of order so far as the things offered for sale are concerned. It is not really a store; it's an exposition.

There isn't a man in the world who has a keener understanding of the human makeup than the big shopkeeper. He knows every string of the instrument and plays diligently upon them all. He lures people with advertisements which are wonder stories. He halts the passing crowd in the streets with a windowful of Christmas wax-works, and once they have come inside, whether with a purpose or out of mere curiosity, the machinery is there to hold them fast.

For weeks the designers, decorators, scene painters, dummymakers have been at work devising and constructing some sort of living pictures fraught with the spirit of the Christmas tale. There is the papier-mâché church, still and beautiful, with snow-covered trees about it, light shining from the tall windows, men, women and children mounting to the portal, and from away in the inside sanctuary somewhere come the music of a mighty organ and voices singing Christmas carols.

It is expensive, but it impresses the people who enter the store. It is the idea of it all that the hearts of the shoppers be mellowed and the spirit be moved to buy more and still more for the holiday giving. That may seem a little "far-fetched" as you sit at home with "grouch on" because something went wrong yesterday, or a man you thought was your friend went back on you, but get into one of those stores, where "you can't hear yourself think" of your troubles for the noise, and you will realize that it is really a very clever conception.

en. Six only stepped up and did the right thing—two women and four men. Analyzing these figures, we have 50 per cent of honesty among women to a bit over 30 per cent among men. Is that, in your opinion, about the average or wasn't the test decisive?"—Kansas City Star.

Walking Graveyard.

Some of the Indian princes have given fifty to sixty lakhs of rupees apiece—over \$2,000,000 apiece—for Great Britain for the war. Beside

Up there before the eyes is an inspiring presentment of the great Unselfishness. And here before you, behind you and on either hand are the goods, just the things for all your kith and kin. It is the shopkeeper's plan that you shall buy while the spell is still on you, while the dim religious light beams out and the Christmas carols burden the air. And you do. You would be less than human if you didn't. You may not think that has anything to do with it, but it has. The shopkeeper would not go to all that expense, you may be sure, if he did not know what results it would bring him.

Even the small street fakers use their wits to sell all they can during the holidays. It is their harvest time of the whole year. And they select the spots on the sidewalks which will be most advantageous for sale of their particular wares. They invent innumerable little devices for the purpose of attracting crowds. They, too, are scientific.

The toyman chooses a spot where the greatest number of children will pass, and spends the day showing the workings of his clock-work vehicles with metallic horses and drivers, his fighting roosters and climbing monkeys, and his automatic animals full of plaintive voice. About the corners where most people pass are stationed the familiar men and women with baby rabbits and beribboned puppets of divers breeds. They know just how to make a woman imbued with the Christmas spirit take pity on the little animals on a cold day and buy them in order that they may have a comfortable home.

The Christmas greens man with his huge boxes of holly and mistletoe, and—more power and less glucose to him—the candy man and something like ten thousand others display their wares from all sides, entice the passing throngs with a hundred little devices, appeal to their sympathy and turn peace and good will into hard cash. To both buyer and seller, from the biggest to the smallest, Christmas has become a science.

CHRISTMAS TREES

From ancient days Christmas trees, lighted with candles, were used in the churches of English churches. But it has been put on record that the introduction of the modern Christmas trees into England was due to the late duchess of Kent, grandmother to King Edward VII, who was credited with having brought the custom from Germany for the amusement of Queen Victoria when a little girl at Kensington palace.

The Christmas tree by 1846 was undoubtedly established at Windsor; indeed, at that period a perfect plantation appears to have sprung up in the drawing room of the castle. In the newspapers of the time it is recorded that after dinner, at which the principal dish was a noble roast of beef weighing 280 pounds, that occupied many hours in roasting, and at which the band of the Scots Fusiliers discoursed such popular airs as Auber's "Bronze Horse" and selections from "Norma," the queen and the prince, with the royal suite, retired to the drawing room, where, on tables, were gracefully displayed "several imitation fir trees upwards of six feet in height, from the branches of which were suspended a variety of French bonbons and numerous elegant presents for the royal visitors and suites." The trees, we further learn, were brilliantly illuminated with wax tapers judiciously placed among the leaves.

It is not certain, however, that the custom had not been in use for centuries in rural parts of Great Britain.

WHEN CATTLE KNELT IN ADORATION.

Many an awe-stricken group has waited in the chill air to see the cattle fall upon their knees in adoration at twelve o'clock, the hour when Christ was wrapped in swaddling clothes. An honest old Cornwall, England, man, who lived at St. Stephen's Down, near Launceston, said, towards the close of the eighteenth century, that he once, with some others, made a trial of the superstition. Watching several oxen in their stalls at twelve o'clock at night on the 24th of December, they observed the two oldest oxen only to fall down upon their knees "and make a cruel moan, like Christian creatures."

There is an old print in the British museum in which the oxen in the stable near the Virgin and Child are represented upon their knees, as if in suppliant posture. This graphic representation is, perhaps, the origin of the foregoing superstitious notion.

But more curious than all is an addition to this superstition, to the effect that the brute creation unanimously refused to acknowledge the change of style, from old to new, under the calendar, though on old Christmas day not only would the bees sing their welcome song but the oxen and asses would kneel in their stalls in token of homage. It was also said that to spin on Christmas day caused cattle to go mad and lame.

SOME PEOPLE DO.

"Did I understand you to say that Willoughby enjoys canned prunes?" asked the man who was slightly deaf.

"No," answered the friend; "I said 'canned tunes.' There's no accounting for tastes."

DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW.

"When we were first married you used to admire my clothes, but you only frowned at them now."

"But, my dear, your father paid for the clothes you wore when we were first married."

DREAMS OF SNAKES; FINDS ONE ON BED

Mother Saves Baby When She Awakes to See Reptile of Her Vision.

Macon, Mo.—Mrs. Ralph Talbot of Ten Mile township was in the bed with her baby and her husband sleeping in an adjoining room when she dreamed of snakes, and the dream was so disturbing that she awoke. The lamp on the table threw a dim ray on the bed and lying near her and the baby on the cover was just such a reptile as she had seen in her dream. But she was a very little woman, and, assuring herself that it was only a dream, she reached over



Lying Near Her Was Reptile She Saw in Dream.

and touched the ugly thing. It moved! So did she; but she didn't cry out, and she had the presence of mind to seize the baby and take it with her. Mr. Talbot awoke and heard the story. He walked into his wife's bedroom and turned up the light. There was no snake to be seen.

"It must have been a dream," he said. Something was said about eating certain heavy food before retiring, when Mr. Talbot detected a slight movement of the cover. He pulled it off the bed and there lay a snake.

ANGRY MOOSE CHARGES AUTO

Giant Animal Becomes Enraged by the Glaring Searchlights on a Big Touring Machine.

Fort Fairfield, Me.—Mr. and Mrs. George S. Osborne of Limestone, and Mrs. Frank O. Osborne of this town, who were returning from Waterville by automobile, were attacked by a bull moose in a stretch of thick woods near Danforth the other night. The animal was attracted by the glare of the headlights, and made a savage rush for the car. It was only by opening up the lever and turning on all the power suddenly that Mr. Osborne managed to avoid the crushing forest giant.

Mr. Osborne and the two women had a pleasant trip through central Maine from Waterville, and as dusk approached in the evening the headlights were turned on. They were driving at a moderate rate of speed through the thick woods near Danforth when suddenly there was a crashing sound in the bushes beside the road. Looking up, they saw the towering, shaggy form of a bull moose, who was enraged by the strong glare of the lights, which were full upon him.

He stood for an instant, and then, launched forward toward the front of the automobile, where the lights were shining. Realizing their danger, Mr. Osborne turned on all the power the car had in reserve. It responded, and the machine grazed the charging moose. Not slackening speed for an instant, Mr. Osborne shot the car through the woods road and out then into the open.

GIRL ROUTS THREE TRAMPS

Whips One, Rescues Baby, Scares Other Two Away and Doesn't Faint.

Lafayette, Ind.—Hazel Lincoln, eighteen years old, battled with three tramps at the home of her father, James Lincoln, eight miles south of Lafayette. The parents were away and the girl was left to care for a baby sister.

Three tramps appeared at the door and asked for food. When told there was no food they demanded money. When she refused one of them seized the baby and told the girl he would kill it. Miss Lincoln rushed at the tramp and tried to take the baby from him. He ran into the yard and the girl followed him.

Her cries for help frightened away the other two tramps and she finally succeeded in getting the baby away from the third. Sheriff Slayback and posse captured two of the tramps.

IS KILLED BY GOOD NEWS

Father Runs to Tell His Daughter of Inheritance and Drops Dead.

New York.—Daniel F. Hawley of Tivoli, Rockland county, overjoyed by receipt of news that he had inherited a \$5,500 legacy, dropped dead in the home of his daughter, Mrs. Bertram M. Wagner, in Leedsville. When he received a letter explaining that in his will his brother, Ralph I. Hawley, had left him half of his \$11,000 estate, Hawley imparted the news to his grandson, Frederick Gardner, and started to run up the stairs to tell Mrs. Wagner. When he reached the top of the attic stairs exhausted he fell dead from heart disease. He was sixty-two years old.

DEMAND FOR QUICK ACTION

Mrs. Bargainhunter Rudely Awakened From Contemplation of That Duck of a Hat.

As usual, the road was "up" and so was part of the street, for that matter. But it takes more than this to keep Mrs. Bargainhunter at home. Her two children comfortably ensconced in the baby carriage, she sailed down the yawning street.

"Oh, what a darling of a duck of a sweet hat!" she murmured. And, leaving the carriage, she walked to the shop window for a closer look. Absorbed in that darling of a hat, she gazed at it all unconscious of the fact that the baby carriage had rolled away into a trench, until at last she was awakened from her blissful dream by the gruff voice of a workman.

"Say, missus," he said, "d'yer want these hiddies any more? 'Cos we're just going to fill the hole up."

Saved by Gold Chain.

A gold chain that she wore around her neck, saved a little girl of Cambridgeport, England, from serious injury, recently. She was on her way to Sunday school, when a bullet exploded by the wheels of a trolley car hit her on the neck. She felt a stinging sensation in her neck and discovered a bloodless cut about an inch long. On looking in at a window she saw that the chain she wore about her neck was cut. She put her hand into the bosom of her dress to get the loose end of the chain and found the bullet. A search of the tracks revealed several exploded cartridges. The police believe they may be a part of the shipment that was stolen from a freight car a short time ago.

Curious Suit.

A curious exposition of callousness and greed was recently made in a civil suit brought against a Colorado surgeon. He became interested in the case of a cripple whom he found begging in the street, and by an operation requiring great skill removed his disability. The relatives of the cripple promptly brought suit against the physician for removing their means of support, claiming that, as a cripple, the youth had brought them in an average of about five dollars daily, while now they were compelled to support him until he could gain the means of earning his living. The judge promptly dismissed the suit on hearing the case for the prosecution.

The Stumbling Block.

"If only grandfather had been more generous," she murmured, "I would say yes."

"But your parents have consented?"

"Yes, but Aunt Sylvia won't."

"What has Aunt Sylvia to do with it?"

"She was the chief beneficiary in grandfather's will."

Its Kind.

"That old rooster over there is ordering a drink."

"Then I bet it's a cocktail."

Rocks Ahead.

"How can he afford to buy his wife such expensive gowns?"

"He can't."

Has to Be.

"Don't you think that judge's speech is inclined to be prosy?"

"Well, naturally, he's sententious."

The only time we notice an impediment in the speech of some people is when an occasion arises to praise others.

If a woman has a hunch that eventuates accurately she calls it an inspiration.

Furs are worn by lady beavers during the summer.

There are men who can't even tell the truth without exaggerating.

Opportunity knocks once, but envy is a continuous hammer wielder.

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And some folks use it toward money and fame. Are you eating right for health?

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DODGING THE BEATEN PATH

Good Story as It is Related, Though It Doesn't Often Happen in Real Life.

Congressman Robert L. Dougherty of North Carolina smiled when the conversation turned to reversing the order of things. He said he was reminded of the case of Bowers.

Bowers met a benevolent party on a railroad train one day, and as the acquaintance ripened a bit he began to spread before the other a history of his life.

"When I was a clerk in a grocery store," remarked Bowers, among other things, "I received only nine dollars a week, and, like many other young men, I fell in with bad companions and began to gamble."

"I see," interrupted the benevolent party, sadly, "you were tempted and took money which did not belong to you."

"Oh, no," cheerily responded Bowers. "In less than a month I won enough money to buy the grocery."

And They So Scarce, Too.

"While in Washington I visited the navy yard and lunched on a battleship."

"You must have a cast-iron digestion."

A Little Joke.

"What makes you think she'll never cut a great figure in any man's life?"

"Well, you see how petite she is!"—Judge.

To convince yourself that you are just a little better than your neighbor, that is easy.

The most common form of pessimism is the belief that a good beginning makes a bad ending.

The average man would be all right if he were only half as perfect as he thinks his neighbors ought to be.

No doubt you may be able to fool a lot of people, but there is always some wise guy.

Many a woman poses as an angel who wears her wings on her hat instead of on her shoulders.

A new broom may sweep clean, but it never comes with a guarantee not to raise blisters.

Lots of pretty good men look as if their wives had got them with trading stamps.